



Open letter to Professor Nishan Canagarajah, Vice-Chancellor of  
the University of Leicester

8 February 2021

Dear Prof. Canagarajah,

We are writing as the editorial collective of *ephemera: theory & politics in organization*. Founded in 2001, *ephemera* is an independent open-access journal that publishes peer-reviewed research on the boundaries of organization studies. *ephemera* has historically enjoyed strong ties with the University of Leicester School of Business, where several past and present members of the editorial collective (and two of the journal's co-founders) have worked and studied.

The editorial collective of *ephemera* would like to protest the University of Leicester's recent decision to lay off 16 members of academic staff who research in the areas of critical management studies and political economy. The journal stands in solidarity with our colleagues who face compulsory redundancy because of their commitment to critical organizational scholarship.

The University of Leicester School of Business has long been at the forefront of critical thinking about management and organizations. It has a track record of producing high quality research that is internationally recognized and widely influential. Faculty members at the School of Business have published in some of the most prominent journals in the field, including *Organization*, *Organization Studies*, *Management Learning*, *Human Relations*, *Gender, Work, and Organization*, *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, *Culture and Organization*, and of course *ephemera*. The research excellence of critical organizational scholars at the School of Business is beyond question. This makes the decision to lay off academic staff who are associated with critical management studies and political economy both baffling and extremely troubling.

The University of Leicester's Strategic Plan includes the promise to 'address global challenges and opportunities'. Critical organizational scholars are uniquely positioned to address these very challenges and opportunities. In their research and teaching, critical organizational scholars seek to question the orthodoxy, challenge the status quo, and bring fresh perspectives to students. Critical organizational scholars recognize that 'business as usual' will only deepen inequality, increase poverty, and accelerate climate change, leading to further social, economic, and environmental crises. It is a grave miscalculation – and a strategic blunder – to divest from critical management studies and political economy at a time when we need them the most.

*ephemera* therefore urges the University of Leicester to reconsider its decision to carry out the proposed redundancies at the School of Business.

Yours sincerely,

The editorial collective of *ephemera*

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